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## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1002<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

Vienna, 29 May 2014

### **In response to the statement by Ambassador Jennifer Brush, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova**

The European Union (EU) and its Member States thank you for your activity report and fully support the efforts of the OSCE Mission to Moldova in carrying out its mandate.

The contribution to a peaceful settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova is central to the Mission's mandate. Its projects aimed at promoting human rights, democracy, the rule of law, media freedom, strengthening of civil society and combating trafficking in human beings and gender inequality also contribute to this.

The increasing efforts by Tiraspol to restrict access by members of your Mission to the Transdniestrian region and to prevent you involving interlocutors on both banks of the Dniester River in implementing your projects are very worrying. At the next round of negotiations in the "5+2" format planned for 5 and 6 June, the participants should use their influence on Tiraspol to put a stop to this and allow the Mission to carry out its mandate without hindrance. The members of your Mission should have full access to the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova, including the Transdniestrian region as well as the Russian arms depot at Colbasna, in order to execute their mandate. We support the Mission's mandate, based on the commitments made by the OSCE participating States, particularly as regards security, and encourage the Mission to implement it actively and continue to follow and report on developments in this area.

You know that the EU remains very committed to the continuation and completion of the discussions in the "5+2" format, the only one that ensures the transparency and legitimacy of a lasting solution that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. Such a solution would be a major step forward for the stability and security of the region and would bring a number of specific benefits to the Republic of Moldova, including the Transdniestrian region. The European Union is willing to support its implementation, including financially. We expect that the meeting scheduled for 5 and 6 June in Vienna will bring tangible progress across all three baskets, particularly in the political, institutional and security aspects of the third basket.

The OSCE Mission plays an important role in supporting reforms in the Republic of Moldova. It should respond to changes on the ground and focus on the areas in which our

Organization has a recognized added value. It is important for all field missions to have an efficient evaluation system and to ensure the efficient use of resources as well as the development of best practices and the transfer of lessons learned. We would appreciate it if you could tell us the main results of the programmatic activities of the Mission.

There is a degree of stagnation in the discussions of the working groups, Tiraspol is regrettably once again attempting to set preconditions for holding meetings in the “5+2” format and there has been a decrease in direct contact between Chişinău and Tiraspol. Given this situation, we are convinced that these discussions need a fresh impetus, without preconditions.

We reiterate our concern over the situation of Latin-script schools in the Transdnestrian region. In our view, the political differences should not prevent children from being educated in the language of their choice. It is important for Tiraspol, which is not in charge of the administration of these schools, to stop hindering their operation. It is essential to put a stop to any measure that could create tension and to ensure that they operate in a normal and enduring manner.

We are very concerned by Tiraspol’s recent attempts to challenge the property rights of farmers living in villages administered by Chişinău on the left bank of the Dniester.

The obstacles to freedom of movement and to the opening of bridges and contacts between residents on both banks necessitate an active dialogue in a spirit of co-operation. This also applies to the incidents within the Security Zone. Nothing in relation to the incidents justifies either the militarization or the withdrawal of the remaining forces of the Russian Army from the Republic of Moldova.

Important demilitarization work remains to be done with regard to all the military forces in the region, transparently and with a view to increasing mutual trust. The OSCE and its Mission to Moldova, which will benefit from our unfailing support, have an important role to play in this.

The success of the Republic of Moldova in its rapprochement with the European Union is impressive. We welcome the very active participation of the Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership. We look forward to the signing on 27 June 2014 of the Association Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova, which also provides for the establishment of a deep and comprehensive free trade zone, and we expect its provisional implementation and entry into force as soon as possible. The citizens of the Republic of Moldova with biometric passports have been able to visit the European Union for short periods without requiring a visa since the end of April, and we welcome this. We hope that all the political and economic decision makers in all the regions of the country will recognize the opportunities available to them and be committed to the resolute pursuit of reforms.

Madam Ambassador, this is probably your last appearance before the Permanent Council as Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova. We thank you most sincerely for the outstanding work you have done as Head of Mission. Your professionalism, tremendous energy and desire to make the work of the OSCE known to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova and the entire world have had a significant impact on the Mission and set the bar

high for your successor. We wish you good luck and every success in the next stage of your career. Thank you very much.

The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, and Iceland<sup>2</sup>, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the members of the European Free Trade Association Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Ukraine, Georgia, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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1 The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

2 Iceland continues to be a member of the European Free Trade Association.